

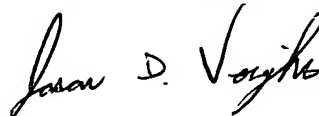
REMARKS

Claims 1, 3, 10, 13, 15 and 20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Thompson et al. (U.S. 6,368,486). Claims 22 and 23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Thompson et al. Claims 2, 4, 14 and 16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Thompson et al. in view of Balagopal et al. (U.S. 5,580,430). Claims 11, 12 and 21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Thompson et al. in view of Minck (U.S. 4,108,743). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

Thompson et al. (U.S. 6,368,486), filed March 28, 2000, is not prior art with respect to the present application which claims priority to German patent application 19940069.5 filed August 24, 1999. Applicants enclose a verified translation of said priority document. Therefore, the aforementioned rejections have been overcome and should be withdrawn.

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Respectfully submitted,  
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